1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

535 784 755 [753] had worked on him. I don't know what made that fellow well. I didn't do it. I just followed D.'s directions. It wasn't I but it was D.'s power that did it. The old man knew what was wrong with S. and how to cure him.

As this story indicates, whenever the dancer gets into difficulty because of his participation, it is to the masked-dancer maker that he must turn. Said one of these shamans, "If a dancer who is working for me gets a pain in his foot, I put a feather on his foot, and it goes away."

535 424 784 [753] The dancer must observe suitable modesty and remember that he is but an instrument of the rite and not its owner:

One man got into trouble from this. He danced three or four times. Then he made his own outfit and carried it on, though he had no right to the ceremony. Soon his baby got sick, and no one could cure her. When she died she made the masked-dancer cry and held her hands outward.

535 424 [120] [123] When I asked a man who had acted as a masked dancer to sketch the designs which had been put upon him, he replied that he was not sure he could do this. Later he refused entirely, saying, "I asked T. if I could draw his masked dancers, and he said, 'You'd better leave those Mountain Spirits alone,' so I can't do it."

The subordinate role of the masked dancer is emphasized in another statement:

If I learned that song without getting the whole ceremony, without having the whole thing turned over to me, if I didn't get it in a spiritual way, it wouldn't do me good. If I painted a man, I might do it in this same way, but it would just make both of us sick. I can pound on the hide and sing the refrain with the chorus, but I shouldn't sing the words of the prayer in the [masked-dancer] song if it isn't mine. The dancer is just in there working for the one who knows the ceremony. I can't tell, just because I danced for him, whether R.'s masked-dancer ceremony is good. He has a good outfit all right.

535 A man must have natural aptitude to become a successful dancer:

According to my understanding about being a masked dancer, it comes like anything else. After you do it once the feeling for it comes to you if you are the right kind for it. I did exactly as I was told, and right from the first time I was almost as good as the best dancer. I ran around that fire all night long. Right from the beginning I was getting better every night. And I was dancing with old-timers. People hardly knew the difference between me and those other dancers.